

AMATEUR CINE

W O R L D

DEC., 1945 — FEB., 1946

ON JUDGING FILMS

By THE EDITOR

. . .

**FILM-MAKERS AND STUDENTS
GET TOGETHER**

By KEVIN L. O'DWYER

. . .

ON FILMING BABY

By A FATHER

. . .

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WINTER
DECEMBER, 1945—FEBRUARY, 1946
VOL. II. No. 9
(Old Series, Vol. X, No. 6)

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GORDON S. MALTHOUSE, Editor

On Judging Films

IT is pleasant to record, for the first time in years, the results of a competition: the contest which the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers felt itself able to hold this year. One congratulates the prizewinners on their enthusiasm and success—and on having had the opportunity of entering.

It is inevitable that the entry should have been lamentably small, judged by pre-war standards. In tribute to the enterprise of the I.A.C. one might, however, add that the point is not that there were only thirty-five entries, but that as many as thirty-five entries were received. Even this number includes films of fairly early vintage, but at least the list of prize-winners gains some radiance from the lustre of names which made news before the war.

Our criticism of the results is not that they are unrepresentative. They could not be otherwise. On the contrary, we are sure that amateurs everywhere will join with us in congratulating the Institute on having set up its flag again. It is a herald of the activity which we hope will quickly distinguish this new era of possible peace and probable plenty.

No, our concern is with the method of judging. The condition which a film must fulfil to win the chief award, the I.A.C. International Challenge Trophy, is unequivocal and therefore reasonably easily determined. It must be the best film entered irrespective of class or type.

We have not seen the prize-winner, "Cornish Cove," by John Martin, but the I.A.C. officials are sincere and knowledgeable amateurs, and one accepts their judgment without reservation. They state that "this film tops" all comers on most counts and is excellently directed, photographed and edited." It also took the cup for the best sound film, awarded for what, at first sight, appears again to be an unequivocal condition—namely, that it shall be the best of the sound films entered.

This seems plain and fair enough, and in

this case it is clear that the best sound film got the prize. "The sound is recorded on two 12 inch discs at 80 r.p.m., and comprises commentary and background music. Modulation of the discs is only 20%, however, a feature which spoils the perfection of this first-rate film" (which, by the way, is in 16mm. colour and runs to 200ft.).

It had to compete against only two other entrants, both of which were highly commended: "ABC of the Road" (16mm. sound-on-film, monochrome, 400ft.) and another film by Mr. Martin, "Christchurch," (16mm. sound-on-disc, colour, 160ft.). The only comment on the sound quality of "ABC of the Road" is the somewhat laconic and non-committal one that it "is up to the standard for direct 16mm. recording as it is to-day." The visual side of the film appears to be uneven. "Direction is good without being outstanding, the balance of the film being incorrect by reason of the long time taken to get down to its subject matter. Photography is good, although uneven in places. It is a useful and worthy film."

No direct comment is made on the sound quality of "Christchurch," but we are told that the film is "highly commended on two scores—for its colour photography and for its placing as a sound film," which means as much or as little as you like. But since the film "tends to be static by comparison with the other sound films and is perhaps not such a compact job as 'Cornish Cove' and 'ABC of the Road'," it is evident that "Cornish Cove" was rightly awarded the prize, a conviction which is strengthened by the fact that adverse criticism is made of one aspect of the sound quality of this film.

But when sound films come to be made in greater numbers, and competition is keener, the case will not be so easily resolved. For on what are sound films to be judged? On their sound or on their merit as films with sound? The distinction is a nice one.

Imagine yourself to be the judge in a competition in which two films, "Spring

(Continued on page 318)

Film-makers and Film Students

In a recent issue we urged the close co-operation for their mutual benefit, of amateur cine clubs and film societies. The following account of the activities of the Irish Film Society shows how striking can be the results of this policy.

SOME five years ago a group of enthusiastic amateur film makers in the Irish Film Society decided to come together to form a film school for the benefit of those wishing to learn the technique of film production in their spare time. The new school was affiliated to the Irish Film Society and only members of the Society were admitted as students.

The founders pooled whatever film equipment they had, and a laboratory and projection theatre were fitted up at the Society's headquarters in Dublin. The aims of the school were to provide a training in the basic principles of film making and to develop a school of informed and intelligent film criticism.

During the first season the school worked on 9.5mm. stock for economic reasons. Many of the accessories used were home-made. Rewinders were made from hand-drill gears and Meccano parts, "floods" were built up from old car headlamps fitted to the telescopic tubes of discarded vacuum cleaners and so on. Camera tripods, editing benches and other apparatus were constructed from odds and ends, many useful hints being obtained from A.C.W.

The projection theatre, with seating accommodation for fifty people, was used in turn as studio and lecture room. Lecturers in the school included Geoffrey Dalton, a regular contributor to "Cinema Quarterly," with professional experience of film making, and Brendan J. Stafford, a professional photographer. Mr. Stafford later joined Paul Rotha Productions and subsequently worked for Michael Powell, for whom he took the stills of "Silver Fleet." He has since obtained considerable experience in camerawork and film production, his latest picture being "Student Nurse."

The first production of the school was "Foolsmate," a twenty minute psychological drama directed by Brendan Stafford, who was also in charge of the cameras. The leading parts were taken by experienced amateur players. The total cost of the film (9.5mm.) was £15. Press critics on the whole were favourably impressed, some maintaining that the picture was of professional quality.

For the second season a more elaborate school programme was prepared. A series of lectures on scenario writing, camera work, lighting, processing, editing, projection and general production was planned for the students. Arrangements were also made for general discussions and debates on the Film, to which members of the Film Society were invited.

The well-known director visited the school and spoke on his experiences in film making. Later his pictures, "Edge of the World" and "49th Parallel" were screened. Other distinguished visitors to the school were John Betjeman, British journalist, author and film critic, and Frank Launder, director of "Millions Like Us" and "She Met a Dark Stranger."

During the year the school organised for the Gaelic League an exhibition of "stills" tracing the history of the cinema. The late Leslie Howard paid a visit to the exhibition where he was introduced to members of the school and was presented with a copy of "New Film," the school news bulletin.

A documentary film of life in an Irish fishing village, "They Live by the Sea," was produced in the summer months. Running time was fifteen minutes and the cost was £10. 16mm. stock was used.

Benefiting by the experience of the first two seasons the School Committee decided to limit the number of students for the year's course to twelve. Well-known personalities in the Irish theatrical and film world, all experts on their subjects, were invited to lecture on the various aspects of the film. Emphasis was laid on the importance of practical work, and students were encouraged at an early stage to arrange their own interior lighting "set ups" and study the results taken with a "still" camera. Model studio lamps, a foot high, and a miniature bust, were found very useful for the demonstration of lighting effects.

A nucleus for a sub-standard film library of such screen classics as Lubitsch's "Cinderella" and Rene Clair's "The Italian Straw Hat" was formed. About a hundred books on the film were made available on loan to students, and "stills" from many significant films in the history of the cinema were purchased.

The progress of the school—as shown by the improving quality of the yearly output of films—was rapid. Badly exposed shots became a thing of the past; careful consideration of camera angles and composition

Get Together

By KEVIN L. O'DWYER

soon led to professional results. It was found that the most elaborate effects could be obtained with the simplest equipment, properly handled. What was needed was imagination and intelligence—not expensive, complicated apparatus.

The usual film unit consisted of from five to six persons: director and assistant, cameraman and assistant, art director and continuity girl. Specialists were called in for model making, cartoon work, etc. Sufficient raw stock was available to meet all the requirements of the school. Where time permitted, the films taken by the students were processed by them in the school laboratory.

The next production of the school was "Camp," a 16mm. documentary film with gaelic titles showing a day in the life of a boy scout under canvas. A number of the shots, such as close-ups of the scouts around the fire in the evening sing-song and interior tent scenes, were taken in the studio. These matched up well with the shots taken on location. Suitable records were chosen to convey the mood of the film and were played on the non-sync.

"Dance School," a film with a self-explanatory title, followed. This monochrome picture introduced colour sequences with pleasing effect. Direction and photography were by Liam O. Laoghaire, pioneer of Irish films, author of "Invitation to the Film" and well known for his writings, lectures and broadcasts on the cinema.

Ordinary members of the Film Society were given every opportunity to benefit by the practical experience of the school and were invited to the premiere shows of the school productions whenever possible. "Tibradden," a 16mm. film, was screened at the Olympia Theatre, Dublin, before an audience of approximately 500. The resulting picture was rather yellow after the brilliant arcs of the standard cinema machines, and the only lens available was a long focus which did not fill the screen. However, considering the size of the projector used and the wattage of the lamp, the show was quite satisfactory.

For the shooting of "Mannon's Acre," the latest production of the school, the Unit went on location during the summer months, sleeping in a hay-shed with their equipment. Written and directed by Dr. Peter Sherry, the film dealt with the sociological problem of the gradual drifting of the agricultural workers to Irish towns and cities. The cast

included both amateur and professional players.

Films sponsored by various outside organisations gave school members the chance of gaining valuable experience under professional working conditions. Kevin O'Kelly photographed and Geoffrey Dalton wrote the script of "To-morrow's Bread," a 35mm. sound production for the Department of Agriculture, urging economy in the use of bread and flour. Geoffrey Dalton was responsible for the scenario and direction of "The Nation's Fuel," a 16mm. sound film for the Turf Development Board, which is shortly to be released. Kevin O'Kelly, who handled the photography, was also engaged on a number of advertising film-strips and produced a cartoon, "Crime in Dungtown" for the Irish Red Cross Society's Anti-Tuberculosis Exhibition.

Recently the Irish Government commissioned Gaumont British International Films Ltd. to make a film of the centenary celebrations of Thomas Davis, the celebrated Irish poet and patriot. Entitled "Thomas Davis, Nation Builder," this 35mm. sound production will be directed by Brendan Stafford and will get world distribution. Colin O. Laoghaire will act as assistant cameraman. Laoghaire's previous work consisted of a silent 16mm. comic puppet film, "How T.B. is Spread," for the Irish Red Cross Society and several publicity shorts.

The policy of the Irish School of Film Technique has always been to encourage the closest co-operation possible between the students—practical film-makers, and the ordinary members of the Society—those who, for the most part are merely interested in film theory. This co-operation has been to the mutual advantage of both parties, the one providing what the other lacked. The results achieved by the school, with the help of the Society have shown what can be accomplished by the Amateur Film Movement provided that enterprise and enthusiasm are not lacking.

The interest of the general public in Ireland has been aroused by amateur productions, while lectures and film displays by members outside the school have raised the standard of film appreciation and brought home to many for the first time the potentialities of the film medium. The most important work of the school, however, has been the training of a body of film technicians which, it is to be hoped, may yet be the nucleus for a national film industry in the not-too-distant future.

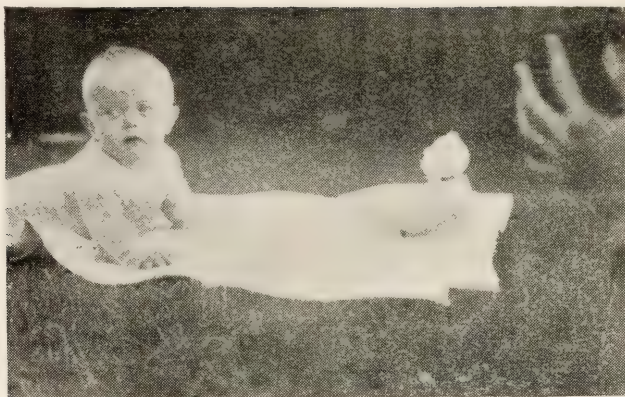


Fig 1. Camera set-up for Fig. 2.

ON FILMING BABY

By THE FATHER OF ONE

TAKING it by and large, a baby progresses at an alarming rate; and the average paternal cinematographer will wish (or be instructed) to record such progress on the deathless plastic at least twice a year, film supplies permitting.

On such an essentially personal matter as a baby film we do not venture to offer any detailed script suggestions: but there are numerous factors affecting the success of such films that can as well be learned from the experiences of others as from the expensive annoyance of inferior shots. The following remarks apply generally, but in particular to outdoor work as studio lighting is not good for infants who show it by tight shut eyes and wrinkled brows.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS. A film lasting about two minutes is envisaged, and it is important that "everyday" situations are used exclusively, as something strange will probably affect the expected reaction and spoil the shot.

AVOIDANCE OF "PLUGGING." Baby may be too marvellous, but, all the same, the film will suffer if it shows nothing else than his cute form and features. Cut-in close-ups of parents, friends, animals, toys, etc., are most advisable. Toys can easily be animated for special effects.

REHEARSALS. Rehearsals immediately prior to shooting just can't be done, at least up to two years, and everything must be staked on the success of the first attempt at each shot, which *will* succeed if rehearsed under identical conditions on (say) the day before filming is planned.

NATURALISTIC ACTION. A good example of this, upon which the whole of the film's action should be based, is the comic stretching routine most babies go through on waking. A little previous

timing of the incidence and duration of these movements after the first gentle waking-up prod will indicate when to start the camera to catch the best effect. Rehearse and time with empty but running camera, of course, to make sure that the unexpected noise does not entirely alter the whole train of events!

ACTING. Even with such personal affairs as baby films, it is really best to stick to the axiom that the actor should not look at the camera. This is simply achieved by getting the baby accustomed to something more interesting than the camera whilst being filmed: the something being most simply interpreted by a cooing mother.

CAMERA. It will have been noted that the above remarks assume *instant availability* of camera, which is, of course, easier said than done. There are, however, several useful tips to assist quick availability that are well worth remembering:—

(a) Decide on a stock camera distance, and get to know by habit how to judge this distance precisely. I take 3 feet as mine, others will choose 40 inches or 4 feet, etc., depending on the portrait lenses or focussing points available with their cameras. 40 inches is, of course, the Pathescope 1 metre lens.

(b) Decide on the necessary lens aperture for the prevailing light conditions.

(c) Set the camera for (a) and (b), wind fully, and then *relax*, with the knowledge that you have only to await the subject's pleasure. Note that the viewfinder parallax must be allowed for. Practise in this is as easily acquired as judging the stock distance. I prefer the precaution of putting on the front window blobs of ink to indicate the strips of the viewed image that are *cut off* when the camera is being used at the stock distance.

(d) Camera angle is important. One often secures the most charming results by taking the camera down to floor level. Close-ups of a baby just able to support himself when dumped face downwards on a rug are always best about three-quarters-full-face, camera on ground looking upwards to the babe's face, which will be about six inches off the rug. To avoid the effect of excessive top lighting, a white cloth should be laid on the rug between camera and subject, to act as a diffusing reflector and give a grand soft general

lighting effect. Such portrait-shots are best done on a bright day but not in direct sunlight, which will produce effects that are disappointing by being too contrasty in tone. Some workers profess to like waist-level finders, but the snag about these is that the image is reversed and one tends to pan in the wrong direction! I prefer the honest to goodness lying down, chin on ground, eye glued to ordinary finder, whilst attendants stand anxiously around and the babe dribbles injudiciously.

The baby-picture snatcher must invoke ingenuity, if his screen work is to be of really



Fig. 2. C.S., Baby looks at Teddy Bear. Note that focus is concentrated on Baby, both the Teddy and the far edge of the white blanket being out of focus.

good class. A few pointers towards such ingenuity are appended. To beginners we would remark, and our colleagues will support us, that ingenuity begets ingenuity: and the cinematographer quite soon acquires that nonchalance under tiresome conditions that spells success.

It will be agreed that the set-up referred to under (d) above will involve an aperture in the $f/5.6$ to $f/8$ region, which at three feet means a depth of focus of about 9 inches either way. A set-up can therefore readily be chosen that would permit focus to be maintained throughout a pan from head to feet: and this is a pleasing effect.

Note also that at a nominal distance of three feet objects at four feet are *almost* in focus: so that if it is desired to blur the background a little, the camera focussed at 3ft. should be about 3ft. 9ins. away. This is finesse: but well worth bearing in mind. If it is desired to stick to the stock distance, the focus for diffused background will be proportionally less than the stock distance: see depth-of-focus tables for your particular lens and aperture, e.g., in the A.C.W. Diary, 1940.

A good "unforeseen" effect is always secured by choosing a camera set-up which suddenly, apparently fortuitously, shows some unexpected action. A good example, easily done, occurs with babies who can just walk. It will be found that, if parked on the two insecure legs and left with no

other means of support, say in the middle of a lawn, the babe will totter and then collapse. If therefore the camera is centred to show feet up to middle, the effect on the screen is first to see the tottering legs then whoosh! either a startled baby face is seen, or a set of panties with legs kicking in the air.

The presence of a reasonable number of titles undoubtedly assists films of this type. Any style except the over-obvious is accept-

Fig. 3. For a study in concentration ("the serious aspect") use some simple action such as toe-grasping.



able. For the case mentioned above, one could use a slightly technical title, as "Equilibrium: stress in two pin-jointed members under compression." In titles so applied trick photography is called for, the general light tone of the film being enhanced by running the titles on letter-by-letter.

So also should all the usual precepts of Production Value be applied to these "little" films: because though what they record is transitory their value grows with the years and they turn into that long-sought miracle, the Mirror of the Past.

Paper is still urgently needed. Please keep on saving all you can.

"DO IT YOURSELF!"

practical ideas for the handyman

MULTIPLANE MODEL SETS

Part IV.

HAVING taken no less than three articles to discuss the theory of the "Multiplane" model set, it is high time for us to get down to practical details. First of all, therefore, let us dispose of the mathematics by constructing a few graphs.

Fig. 10 is a graph giving plane widths at various distances from the camera for a number of lenses in both inches and millimeters. In practice, one line only will be drawn to suit the lens in use, which, for 16mm. film, will be of one inch focal length. This not only simplifies further calculations, but retains normal perspective as "seen" by the human eye. Lenses of greater and lesser focal length will introduce telephoto and wide angle effects respectively, which

In each issue our contributor supplies worth-while ideas: things to make and things to do. Suggestions for gadgets are welcomed.

By G. A. GAULD, B.Sc.

throw of 60 feet. By proportions, this gives a projected frame .379" x .283". Now the printed or photographed frame should be somewhat larger to allow for a slight margin, and I have selected a width of .390" (9.93mm.) as being suitable. The depth of the frame can be taken to be three quarters of the width.

Ignoring the slight increase in focal distance when a lens is used for near objects

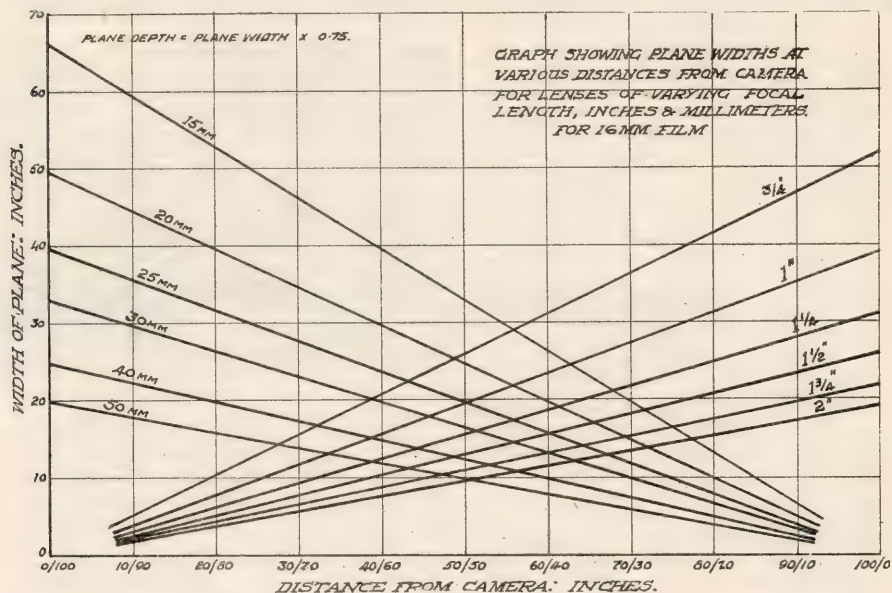


Fig. 10.

are to be avoided in this work until considerable experience has been gained.

Taking 16mm. film, therefore, as our example, and Messrs. Kodak as our authority, we are informed that a three inch projection lens will require a screen 91" x 68" for a

as compared with its focal length at "infinity," the plane width is given by:—

$$\text{Plane Width (ins.)} = \frac{\text{Distance from Camera (ins.)}}{\text{Focal Distance (ins.)}}$$

which, for a lens of one inch focal length at

100 inches produces a plane width of .39 ins. By plotting this point and joining it to the origin by a straight line, the graph for the one inch lens is obtained, and the plane widths may be read off as required.

No doubt, our "imaginative" scene will first appear as a sketch, and a further simplification is achieved if we standardize its size. It should not be too small, and I have chosen 10" x 7½" as a suitable size. Since our sketch will be drawn to "normal" perspective as seen by the "mind's" eye, it will not be a difficult matter to estimate the size of a normal man by sketching him in at any required point, whether that point be in the foreground or, for example, on a distant hilltop. If we "standardize" our little man as being 5' 6" tall, we can draw two more graphs which will give us practically all the remaining information we require. The fact that we may not expect to find a man 5' 6" tall in Fairyland is of little consequence, as we shall see later.

Using a 1" lens and a frame width of .390", we find from our first graph (or more accurately for this purpose, by calculation) that the 10" wide sketch will "fill" the frame if set up at a distance of 25.6 inches from the camera. For the moment, let us imagine that we have sketched in our little man on a selected plane, and, on measuring him on the sketch, find him to be exactly 2½" high. It is clear that, on the sketch, he will be drawn to a scale of ½" to one foot. If this plane is erected on the model set 51.2 inches from the camera, twice as far away, the plane will have to be twice the size to fill the film frame, and, consequently, the little man will have to be 5½" high to correspond. This means that the plane will now be drawn to a scale of 1" to one foot.

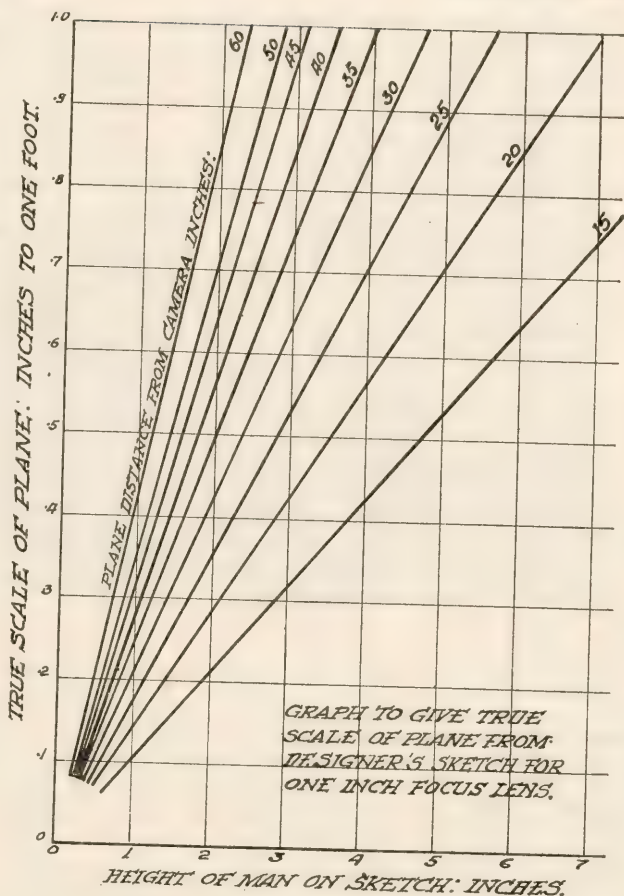


Fig 11.

The idea can be expressed as a formula :—

$$\text{Scale (1 ft.) : } \frac{M \times d}{5.5 \quad 25.6}$$

where M is the height of the man in inches on the sketch, d is the distance of the corresponding plane on the model set measured from the camera in inches.

With the formula, we can draw the graph indicated in Fig. 11. This gives us the true scale of any plane on the model set, an item required, it will be remembered, for determining the amount of movement to be imparted to the plane to achieve the "Multi-plane" effect associated with camera movement. The graph should be drawn on tenth squared paper to include "Height of Man" up to 10 inches. As the lines will be too close for accurate reading in the first square, for heights of less than one inch proceed

thus:—If the scale for a height of 0.4 inches is required, read 4 inches, which gives 0.85. The scale for 0.4 inches will, therefore, be .085 inches to one foot.

The "Rangefinder" type of graph shown in Fig. 12 will give us the actual full size distances of objects on the sketch, so long as we can estimate the height of a normal man by drawing him in on the selected plane. It is drawn by simple proportions on the principle that if our man is one inch high on the sketch (which fills the frame at 25.6" from the camera), then he will be full size at a distance of:—

$$25.6'' \times \frac{5.5 \times 12}{1} \\ = 1690'' \text{ or } 141 \text{ ft.}$$

If he measures only $\frac{1}{2}$ ", then, in reality, he will be twice as far away, or 282 feet distant,

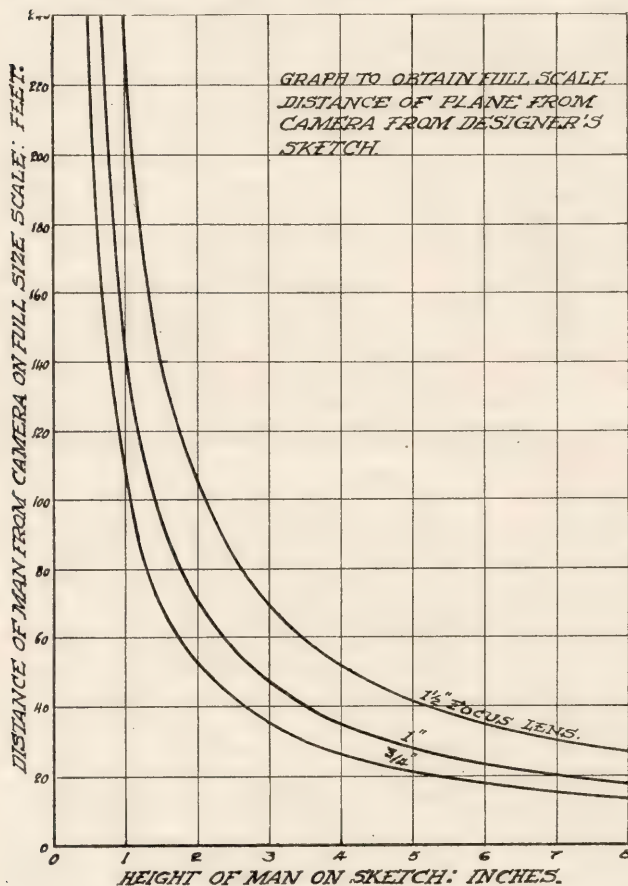


Fig. 12

and so on. A few points are calculated in this way and plotted on the graph. By drawing a smooth curve through the points, we are able to read off the answer for any "Height of Man" required.

Here again, the graph need only include up to a "Height of Man" of 10 inches, and the results for heights of less than one inch are read off by reading the equivalent number of inches and making the decimal correction. Thus where a man-height of 8 inches gives a distance of 18 feet, a height of 0.8 inches will mean a distance of 180 feet, and so on.

To illustrate the construction of a model set, using the principles we have discussed, I have chosen a compromise between a "natural" setting and the truly "imaginative" form, as will be seen by an inspection of Fig. 13. Here we have an "Alice in Wonderland" type of setting, a "natural"

woodland glade inhabited by little people who are visited by our hero and heroine, a toy soldier and his girl friend.

Although Fig. 13 was drawn within a 10" x 7 1/2" frame in the original, it is not a true "designer's" sketch. The latter would not normally show the characters, nor need it be drawn to such detail. Broad outline, washed in, perhaps, to get an idea of the light and shade required, would suffice; the detail can be confined to the actual plane in the model set.

In the story, the two puppets have just encountered the little man, who is in a great hurry. As he appeared in close-up in the preceding shot, a low camera angle is used, introducing a slight additional complication, which we will dispose of later. As the little man crosses the screen, the two puppets turn and follow him, the camera tracking with them through the wood; hence the need for the "Multi-plane" technique.

Scale is a relative term, and although the setting is full size, we can obtain all the information we



Fig. 13.

require in terms of "doll's" feet, using the soldier (representing our man, 5' 6" tall —without hat!) as our rangefinder. As he will be a puppet $5\frac{1}{2}$ " high in the model when appearing full length, "doll's" feet will become inches in the set where true scale reproduction of the scene is used.

It will be obvious that the area of the stage over which the puppets are likely to move must be built to true scale throughout. In the sketch, this "true scale" area is bounded by "front stage," i.e. the bottom line of the sketch "frame" and the plane containing the large "mushroom" to the left.

Now, just to see where we are, the graph in Fig. 10 reminds us that a 10" wide frame will fill the camera gate opening when set up at 26 inches from the camera. The soldier measures $3\frac{3}{4}$ " on the sketch, and the graph in Fig. 12 puts him at 35 "doll's" feet or 35 actual inches on the model set. To find out the position of the first plane, we must decide how high a "mushroom" is to be! Well, let us say that it shall be about the same height as the top of our toy soldier's hat. In line with the first large "mushroom," therefore, he would measure about $3\frac{1}{2}$ ", placing this plane at 40 inches from the camera. This settles the "true scale" area of the stage.

We shall deal with the positioning of the remaining planes in the final article, but, as we shall want to know where they are, by measuring up against the other three sets of mushrooms we find them to be 70, 175 and 700 feet from the camera, respectively. Now the large tree is obviously a good deal further away than the mushroom at its roots, so we will estimate it to be twice as far away, or 350 feet from the camera. The next tree with its mushrooms is 700 feet away, and, if we assume the most distant trees to be of the same variety, we can argue that, as they appear to be about one fifth as thick in the trunks, they will be five times as far away. That puts them at 3,500 feet from the camera. I know this is getting on towards a mile in real life, but do not forget that these are "doll's" feet. These distances will not be represented by the equivalent number of inches on the model set, because we are going to compress them in order to keep the stage down to home studio dimensions!

This will be discussed in the next and concluding article, and at the same time I hope to describe a very simple way of manipulating all the planes simultaneously in order to secure the "Multiplane" effect for which we are striving.

This is the Equipment we need . .

by GEORGE H. SEWELL, A.R.P.S.

I WAS recently privileged to talk to the members of the substandard section of the British Kinematograph Society on the subject of apparatus for substandard film production, and I have been asked by the Editor of *Amateur Cine World* to ventilate the subject further in these columns.

The substandard film producer is considerably handicapped, as compared with his 35mm. colleague, by the absence of certain technical aids which have come to be regarded as indispensable by the latter.

Substandard cine cameras are not necessarily among those shortcomings, because the advanced 16mm. cameras are in some directions more elaborately equipped than those used in the 35mm. studios. That in itself is evidence of the comparative lack of technical progress in 16mm., because such camera elaboration dates back to the latter part of the silent days of 35mm. and has long been superseded by better methods in professional production.

Sound, in particular, has brought a requirement for a camera which will run rigidly at one correct speed, abnormal speeds of operation being carried out with cameras specially designed and used for the purpose. Such facilities as reverse running and fading have become redundant, due to the introduction of the optical printer.

This is all to the good, because the superimposition of two or more images, the making of fades, the building of montages, and so on, can now be carried out in the quiet and calm of the laboratory, and these effects can be placed correctly and last exactly as long as is required by the editor.

No longer does he find that the camera-made fade comes a foot or two too soon or too late for his purpose, while the cameraman is saved the nerve-racking experience of making a string of dissolves on scenes and set-ups of differing character over a relatively long period of time, with the knowledge that if he breaks down on any one of them he may have to go back to the beginning and start the whole series again.

The introduction of a truly efficient substandard optical printer is, therefore, a prime requirement if the substandard film producer is to have the same freedom of technique as the standard worker.

Sooner or later an efficient 16mm. sound recording camera will be more generally required, but it is pleasant to know that there

are several in development or in being in this country and in U.S.A.

Lighting equipment should present no problems, as all the experience of the designers for standard lighting equipment is immediately available, and the smaller studio units will serve the purpose admirably. Portability is of little significance when serious work is contemplated, and thus the photoflood type of unit becomes less important in this field.

The next stage in which the lack of equipment is most strongly felt is in editing. The 35mm. editor is equipped with the Moviola, Editola or similar apparatus which enables him to see a moving picture in his cutting room and to listen to the associated sound track.

At present nothing similar exists here for the substandard worker except the Kodak, Craig and Bell and Howell animated viewers, all of which are operated by the film itself and which provide no index as to the speed at which the film is passing through them, thus making it impossible to close-time your cutting, except by placing the film in a projector.

What is required is a motor-driven apparatus which can be run at a known speed, and which preferably shows a projected picture several inches wide, in the manner of the 35mm. Editola. The American "Moviola" Corporation have a 16mm. instrument, but we have no technical details of its construction. We have also heard of several pieces of 16mm. silent viewing equipment being produced in this country, but again have as yet no precise technical data.

Whatever the general design of such apparatus, it is essential that the film can be loaded in and taken out instantly without the need for sprocket threading. Preferably the film should run vertically, so that it can fall down into a bin during examination, and it should incorporate a punch to mark exactly the frame in the gate at which it is decided to cut.

A new form of 16mm. splicer is also required. There are several admirable pieces of apparatus available for 16mm., such as the English "Ensign," the American "Craig," and the Griswold and Premier. But all of these are hand-operated and become very tedious to use when a large number of splices are to be made continually.

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MAKING A GOOD SPLICE

CAN you make a good splice? The ability to do so is one of the first essentials of good showmanship. A well-made splice should run through the projector without causing a minor earthquake on the screen. It should stand as much strain as the rest of the film. If you quickly jerk the ends of a strip of film containing a splice, that splice should hold. For splicing is not a sticking together of two pieces of film, but the *welding* of them.

The chemicals used in film cement are solvents, causing the surface of the film to soften if a small quantity is applied. A greater quantity will cause the film to dissolve. The chemicals also have the property of drying quickly, so that if two pieces of film are placed in contact with each other and slight pressure applied after an application of film cement, the two surfaces of the films will fuse together as the chemicals dry out.

For my own part, I find that slightly unorthodox methods are sometimes best. For instance, if you slightly moisten the emulsion before scraping, it will slide off the base quite easily. A touch of the tongue to the finger, which is then passed over the end of the film, is sufficient if not exactly hygienic.

It is sometimes recommended that the shiny side of the 'opposite' piece of film should be roughened by passing the end once or twice over a piece of sand paper, but it is difficult to roughen only the area of the splice, and it is just as effective to apply a little film cement, wait for a second, then wipe off with a clean rag. This method is particularly effective with tinted film, as the dye which would prevent the cement

from reaching the film base is removed and can be seen on the rag.

When applying the cement to the piece of film from which the emulsion has been removed, take care not to dab on too much, or it will run and soften the film all round the joint. As it dries, the film will go brittle and the result will be a thick lumpy joint. If too little cement is applied, it will not soften the film base sufficiently, and the result will be a weak joint that will probably come adrift during its first passage through the projector.

My choice is for a brush rather than a glass rod, since it is easier to control the amount of cement with it. I dip it in the bottle half way up the bristles and before withdrawing it press the bristles against the inside of the neck of the bottle, thus removing the surplus cement and leaving just sufficient on the brush to make a perfect joint.

Most splicers have a metal pressure pad which is pressed down over the splice and locked into position. Although this arrangement is effective, I prefer finger pressure, manipulating the drying joint continually between fingers and thumbs. This ensures that all air is expelled from between the two joined sections of film, and the heat of the fingers assists the surplus cement to evaporate more quickly.

It is absolutely essential that there are no air bells in the joint, otherwise it will come apart after very few runs through the projector. The presence of air, indicated by light patches in the splice, means that the whole of the area of film comprising the splice is not in close contact with the opposite piece of film, consequently the "weld" is not complete.

By J. G. KIRKHAM

THIS IS THE EQUIPMENT WE NEED (Continued from page 304)

The serrated block type of scraper is not, in my view, always desirable. It seldom remains adjusted truly parallel to the splicer anvil for a very long period, and consequently splices become thinner one end than the other, while it is also possible to bear down too heavily on to the film and tear the register pins through the film sprocket holes. The ideal instrument is the Bell and Howell foot-operated instrument, on similar lines to the 35mm. machine, with a flexible blade type of scraper which cannot move the film however much you bear down on the scraper block.

These are a few of the most important pieces of apparatus, but consideration can

also with advantage be given to rewinds and editing tables, plain and split spools, stripper plates, and other pieces of apparatus for use in the editing room. It should not be difficult for the manufacturer who wishes to serve this market to call together a few of the users who are itching to acquire such advanced apparatus, to get them to state and clarify their requirements, and then at least to put some designs on the drawing board. There are a number who, out of the depth of their immediate need, would be only too anxious to assist him in that way. In that number I include myself.

Amateur in the Air

By **HUGH BADDELEY**

I WAS fortunate in having the opportunity recently, despite the fact that I am in the R.A.F., of making a film for a squadron of the Air Training Corps. This completed film, which depicts all the aspects of training, was shown to an audience which included Air Vice Marshal Sir Charles Burnett and members of his staff of Central Command, A.T.C.

When I accepted the task my first problem was to familiarise myself with the organisation of the A.T.C. and decide just what was to be included. Three courses are provided, one for each air-crew, wireless personnel and mechanics. So a script was prepared showing three recruits, one to each of these courses, enrolling and passing through all the stages of their training, the film to conclude with sequences of each one doing his job in the Air Force proper after leaving the A.T.C. When the script had been approved by the Commanding Officer six likely cadets were detailed for camera tests, and I selected three.

We met with many problems during the six months that were required for shooting, not least of these being the difficulty of fitting in my off-duty times with the three weekly meetings of the squadron, two of which were evenings and the third on Sunday morning. The Sunday morning meeting was the only one on which exteriors could be shot, of course, and since I had only one Sunday to myself in three, bad weather on one of them was a major disaster involving a break of outdoor shooting of six weeks!

There were more than a dozen classes to be filmed and these, together with shots in the canteen, interviews with the C.O. and sequences showing sports and recreation, made a total of some 20 scenes in all, each in a different room or location.

It was rarely found possible to shoot more than one interior scene in an evening owing to the time required to transport and re-erect lighting units in the different class-rooms. Interior lighting was provided by three 500 watt units on collapsible stands. Fortunately, as most of the classrooms had walls of cream distemper with excellent reflective qualities, this small lighting equipment was found quite adequate with a $f/1.5$ lens and Kodak Super XX 16mm. film.

For most close and mid-shots an exposure of $f/3.5$ — $f/4$ was required, wider stops only

being necessary for longer shots in which the light was less concentrated. In these latter cases, when apertures up to $f/1.5$ were sometimes required, the resulting lack of depth of focus was a real problem which needed constantly watching. A wide angle lens was found to be a great advantage in some of the smaller rooms where space did not permit the camera to be far from the subject. An exposure meter was used throughout.

By way of linking sequences together without titles, and often to indicate the subjects on which classes were working, shots were frequently introduced of Squadron Orders and timetables. These were typewritten, and typescript is not easy to film clearly and large enough to be easily read on the screen. I was fortunate here in having access to a typewriter in an office in the district with a particularly large type on which I copied out the relevant parts of Squadron Orders.

Even then, the distance from the lens at which these appeared large enough on the screen was below the minimum focal distance of the camera's normal lens. So I resorted to the old dodge of unscrewing the lens until the type came into focus on the visual focussing device which is fitted to most turret model cameras such as the one I was using. Exposure tests on the end of reels finally ensured results as readable as the best normal title.

Incidentally, when I take such tests I always make a point of filming the aperture, lighting, film stock and camera speed scribbled in chalk on a small blackboard and hanging the results in a clip on my titler. In this way a collection of test shots soon mounts up likely to cover most contingencies.

Much of our subject matter was inherently interesting and full of movement. The mechanics class dismantling two old aero engines belonging to the squadron, and the aeronautics class having practical instruction on an old Avro Biplane, another proud possession, were particularly filmic subjects.

A diversion between the preliminary and advanced training sections of the film was provided by a sequence depicting physical training and sports activities. We did not refrain from adding touches of humour, much appreciated later at the squadron "preview."

The final scenes showing the cadets at work in the R.A.F. were the source of some headaches. We were unable to obtain permission to film inside a service wireless cabin. However, we borrowed some "props" and also some wireless operators from my camp, built a set, dressed our cadets in R.A.F. uniform and obtained convincing results.

With the scenes of the air-crew cadet we were more fortunate, and here again my being in the service proved useful. I was able to get permission from Flying Training Control to film on a training 'drome (on condition that they viewed the results before the film was "released") and we took Cadet Gates, the air-crew recruit, down and dressed him in full flying kit. Our aim was to show him climb into a 'plane; take off and appear to perform various evolutions in the air. Quite obviously he would not do this in reality and some faking was necessary.

We were given every assistance, and a training plane on the ground was put at our disposal. The extract from the script shows how shots taken on the ground were cut into those taken in the air, building up this illusion. I began by taking shots of the "pilot" climbing into the cockpit, the motor being started and the 'kite' appearing to move off, suggested by panning the camera towards the rear of the plane in a close shot and cutting to another plane actually moving down the runway.

I then lay on my back and obtained various angles of the pilot in the cockpit, with a background of sky. Next I sat on the tail, with the prop. revving and shot along the body, once again

Amateur in the Air

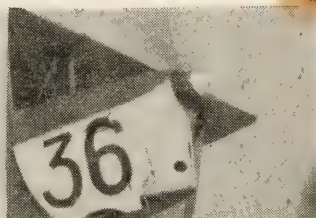
A PICTURE LESSON IN EDITING



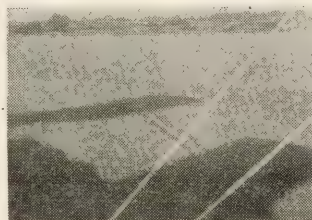
No. 156. FADE IN.—The air-crew cadet, now in R.A.F. flying kit, climbs into the cockpit of a training plane.



No. 159. Full shot of the plane as member of ground crew swings "prop"



No. 160. Side angle of nose of plane as "prop." revs up.



No. 163. The shadow of the plane travelling along the grass as plane gathers speed.



No. 164. Cadet's plane with tail now lifted becomes airborne.



No. 167. Closer shot, same angle, showing instrument panel.



No. 168. Cadet's plane now flying at fair height.

NOTES

Shots 156-161 incl. and 166, 167 and 169 were taken on ground before take-off. All other shots were taken from a plane alongside. The stills are reproductions from 16mm. reversal frames. A negative was first made on 35mm. positive stock, using an enlarger with 200 watt lamp as illuminant, lens 2ft. from film at f/16. Printing from the contact negatives so obtained was done at f/4.5, average exposure 30 secs. Scrupulous cleanliness is necessary in enlarging from so small a negative, the smallest dust specks reproducing as large blemishes.



No. 157. He straps himself into the seat.



No. 158. He pulls his goggles over his eyes and nods for the "prop" to be swung.



No. 161. Cadet in cockpit, camera pans to rear to suggest forward movement of plane. Cut quickly to—



No. 162. Plane travelling down runway, taken from another plane taking off alongside.



No. 165. Plane soars over the hangers, gaining height.



No. 166. Looking forward from tail of plane towards "prop.", with cadet in cockpit in foreground.



No. 169. Cadet glancing around and down over side of cockpit,



No. 173. Cadet's plane peels off and circles downwards.

avoiding all background except sky. Other similar shots for insertion were taken and then negotiations for a flight began.

The Duty Pilot would be delighted to take us up in a 'kite' that was waiting to be tested! (I secretly hoped that the test would show it to be airworthy. I had my new camera with me.) He arranged for three planes to take off simultaneously, side by side, and to do formation flying; in this way I was able actually to photograph the two planes alongside me lifting their tails and then becoming airborne. Over the "intercom." the pilot asked "What next?" and I was able to have us turn so that the evening sun was in the best position, and to suggest various manoeuvres.

Filming in an open cockpit is not easy. I would warn anyone contemplating it to get a particularly good grip of

(Continued on page 317)



TRACKING it DOWN

Secretary: C. LESLIE THOMSON, B.Sc.

Secretary's Report

SOME time ago we discussed in these pages the question of amateur sound-on-film recording, and expressed the view that this field is unlikely to become really popular before high-quality apparatus is available at reasonable cost. Until that happy day, synchronised S.O.F. recording will only be possible to those amateurs who are willing and able to make up almost every piece of equipment required. Mr. Desmond Roe, whose Note, "Elements of S.O.F. Recording" is well known to readers, has recently been making enquiries behind the scenes. He reports that so far as the British market is concerned there seems to be no immediate possibility of any big manufacturer catering for the amateur. At the moment the chances of importing sound-recording gear seem further away than ever!

Disc recording blanks and film stock, however, are slowly creeping back on to the market, and we are accordingly very glad to have a thoroughly practical account from Mr. Philip Jenkins of the Playback Sound technique. He outlines a method of producing sound films with an absolute minimum of special apparatus, and this of a relatively simple nature. The system is applicable to a very wide range of subjects, and is limited only in that accurate lip-synchronism is not practicable. As Mr. Jenkins mentions in his account, we shall be glad to deal with your questions on this or any other amateur sound-film topic and, as always, be even more happy to receive information or suggestions from you.

It had been hoped to publish also the second instalment of Lieut. Downes' systematic discussion on quality amplifier design, the first part of which appeared in the September issue, but unfortunately it has been necessary to hold it over together with several smaller items, including two interesting conversion reports and a few suggestions from readers about improving the effectiveness of the home cinema. We do hope that our shyer readers will hesitate no longer about sending us their ideas and

personal discoveries in projection technique, as we should like to have a really representative collection of hints and tips on sound-film presentation in our next meeting.

Finally, an item for new readers, and possibly a reminder to our older friends. We have a set of "Notes" contributed by members of the T.I.D. Advisory Board on various subjects of interest to the amateur sound-film worker. These include: "Effective Presentation," "Sound Tracks and their Faults," "Elements of S.O.F. Recording" (mentioned above), "Intermittent" and "Dual-gauge Soundhead." Any of these may be borrowed by sending 4d. in stamps for each Note, to cover postal expenses.

SOUND FOR THE AMATEUR

Many readers have expressed considerable interest in sub-standard sound film recording, but have pointed out that in the majority of cases circumstances prevent either the purchase or the construction of a sound-on-film recorder. What, they ask, can they do in the meantime.

We must make it clear, once again, that we do not expect the dabbler to achieve success in these experiments, but the serious lone wolf, and certainly the well-compounded cine society, should find the following suggestions of direct practical interest.

Disc recording is well within the capabilities of the serious amateur sound engineer. True, absolute synchronism with film is attained only with difficulty, but in many cases this is not essential. We are thinking now especially of films requiring only a commentary and background music. Many an amateur documentary (and professional too) comes within this category.

One must also remember that to achieve good disc recording is a stepping stone to sound-on-film recording. There is much to learn in studio technique, microphone placement, elimination of noise, amplifier design and a host of other things which can be learned equally well on disc or film. Disc has the added advantage of being cheaper

(a 12-inch blank costs about 5/-), and permitting immediate playback (with "acetate" type blanks).

True, discs have disadvantages. The customary types of blank do not have as great a life as the ordinary commercial pressing, and also require care in choice of needle, according to the recommendations of the manufacturer of the blank. Usually fibre needles are specified, though some recordists prefer steel "trailing" needles, or even blunt type steel or chromium needles. And, of course, the discs are usually glass based, so the rule is "handle with care!"

The disc recording outfit is not so very formidable.

Shown in block schematic form in Fig. 1, the outfit comprises a microphone, feeding into a high gain amplifier. The frequency characteristic required in recording demands

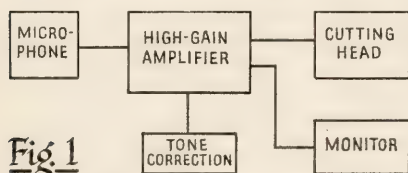


Fig. 1

Fig. 1. Unit layout for Disc Recording.

a tone control on the amplifier to give reduced bass response. The output of the amplifier feeds the cutting head of the recorder, through correct matching, and also suitable means for monitoring. This is usually a pair of headphones, often in conjunction with a meter as volume indicator.

The recording head comprises a powerful gramophone-motor driving a turntable. The cutting head can comprise an ordinary magnetic pick-up head, or one specially wound with a low-impedance coil to match the output line of the amplifier.

The traversing gear is so arranged that about 96 grooves to the inch are cut, the cutting head being made to move across the disc at a suitable speed. The pressure of the cutting head upon the disc is such that the "cut" penetrates to a suitable depth in the disc, but does not go right through to the glass base.

The cutting stylus can be of any one of several materials, of cost in fair proportion to the life. Cheapest are steel styli, while more expensive are the sapphire styli.

A home built recorder is shown in Fig. 2. This was constructed by two members of the T.I.D. advisory board, who will be glad to help other potential recordists who

need advice on specific questions—and don't forget that stamped addressed envelope!

Playback

The second experiment in sound work which the amateur cine society might find interesting, to say the least, is to shoot what looks like real honest-to-goodness synchronised sound, singing, dancing and so on, though not normal speech.

This can be done, and in professional circles nearly always is done, by recording the sound first.

Then, in the studio, the sound is played back (hence the name "playback") to the artistes who perform their singing or dancing in exact step with the already recorded sound.

Only very little rehearsal is normally necessary to achieve a high standard of synchronism.

It is possible to have the sound-on-film recording made at any of the commercial sound studios, such as Leavers Rich, of Wardour Street, W.1, or Imperial Sound Studios, also of Wardour Street.

The sound can either be recorded direct on to 16mm. or on to 35mm., from which a 16mm. (or 9.5mm.) reduction print can be made.

The cost of recording varies, but is of the order of 3½d. to 4d. per foot of film recorded.

The recording made and printed, one is ready to start work on the reproducer. This can be either a sound film projector with internal motor disconnected, or a specially built soundhead.

Typical of suitable projectors is the

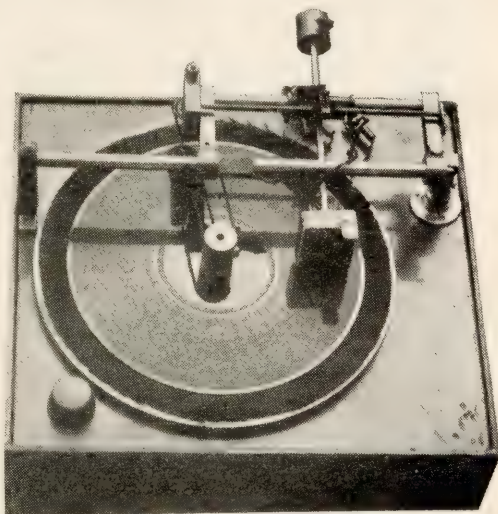


Fig. 2. An Amateur-built Recording Unit.

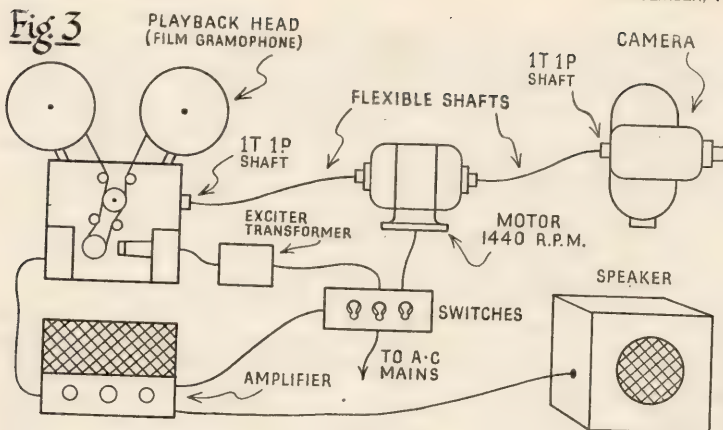


Fig. 3. Diagrammatic view of set-up for shooting films with Playback Sound.

Bell & Howell, whose inching knob permits connection to an external drive shaft, while the clutch allows one to disconnect the internal motor.

The alternative of building a soundhead specially for the job of reproducing S.O.F. is preferable, and the bulk of the advice and constructional data given in our previous issues is fully applicable in this instance. On the face of it it looks easy to build a soundhead; a sprocket and reduction gear, film retaining rollers, scanning drum, fly-wheel, etc., optical system and exciter lamp and not so very much else. But to get it working perfectly demands care in design and construction, as is to be expected.

Almost any camera is suitable where drive can be effected externally by a one-turn-one-picture shaft (which can be specially fitted in some instances, although it may mean temporarily disconnecting the clockwork motor. Such a conversion was described in A.C.W. of November, 1940—pages 210 and 211).

Now the camera, and the playback head ("film gramophone")—both of which should have one-turn-one-frame shafts on which to couple the drive—have to be driven in exact synchronism.

In professional work, special "interlock" motors are used which come up to speed and run in exact synchronism. These are beyond the means of the average amateur, so one has to look for a cheap but reliable substitute.

This is available in the form of flexible shafting. The sort of stuff used in dentists' drills is excellent, but a less expensive version of the same thing is obtainable from S. S. White Co., Britannia Works, St. Pancras Way, London, N.W.1.

One single motor is used with double-ended shaft, that is to say, two drives can be

taken from it, one from each end of the shaft. Be sure that playback head and camera are both driven in the right direction. If not, a pair of 1:1 gears is necessary to reverse one of the drives.

The choice of motor is an important point. First it should run at 1,440 r.p.m., which gives 24 frames per second when connected to a one-turn-one-picture shaft on camera or playback head.

Secondly, at least 1/20th h.p. is necessary to run a 16mm. camera and reproducer head. More might be needed if it is not possible to keep the flexible cables fairly straight and short.

A word of warning. If you have to use a motor which is obviously too powerful (for example, 1/4 h.p. motors are more plentiful than the smaller sizes) then fit not only a slipping clutch in the camera drive, but also a trip switch in the camera to stop the motor in case of a film jam-up. "Micro switches" are suitable for use as buckle trips in the camera.

Having fixed up the complete equipment and coaxed it into satisfactory operation, one is ready to start camera work.

Start off each take with a marked frame on both sound print and negative raw stock, in position in playback and camera gate respectively.

Careful note is taken of these "synchronism marks"; if they should become mixed up the film editor will have an unenviable job sorting them out again!

A small but important point is to get the artistes to start their action at just the right moment. In some cases, such as a song, this is easy as there is usually an introduction. Other cases, however, demand previous signals, and these can take the form of (say) six "plops" made by scratching clear

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lines across the track, area of black leader film at regular intervals. Alternatively, something like the six pips of the B.B.C. time signal can be recorded. This is then cut on to the front of the music track (or whatever the subject matter may be) so that five "pips" go by and where the sixth would come the music commences.

The finished films are printed and the prints synchronised frame for frame from the respective start marks of the various takes. The picture is then cut from one take or scene to the other, always rigidly preserving synchronism.

If it is possible to improvise a "double head" projector which will run sound and picture on separate films in synchronism, the editing can be checked as it progresses. In fact, some amateurs prefer to keep their sound and picture records on separate films.

Usually, however, a combined ("married") print is the aim, as this can be shown on any ordinary sound projector.

One cuts the negative to match precisely the cutting of the print, which has now served its purpose, and sends the edited negative, and the sound negative, to a trade laboratory for them to make a married print from the two negatives.

Some laboratories have facilities for contact printing both 16mm. sound and picture negatives, while others include among their services printing of 35mm. sound negative on to 16mm., while contact printing the picture negative.

Remember that in editing the films one must maintain frame for frame synchronism on sound and picture. A clear statement of this fact is then sent with the film to the laboratory, with the instruction to advance the sound the required amount (26 frames for 16mm. or 20 frames on 35mm.) when making the print.

It is not until one receives the print back from the laboratory and exhibits it that one feels the full pride on having produced an amateur film complete with sound!

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Can you tell me if such a machine exists? If so, where? If not, can you suggest any firm or individual who would like to construct one?—R.C.P.C.

A. You do not state which size of cine film you are interested in.

For 35mm. film the apparatus you mention is a recognised form of equipment used by film editors. The American version is known as a "Moviola," and can be obtained (in normal times) in both silent and sound version. No importation for civilian purposes is permitted at the present time. An English version of this instrument, known as the Acmiola, is made by the A.C.M. Co., Ltd., Denham, Middlesex. Another design is made by Messrs. Photo Electric Co., Ltd., 71, Dean Street, London, W.1, and this is a sound machine complete.

No. Nothing of the kind is made here for substandard film (i.e., 16mm. or smaller sizes). The American 'Moviola' is made in 16mm. size, but is not now available for the reason above stated. There has hitherto been no extended demand for substandard animated sound viewers. It is believed that Messrs. Jackson's Cine Equipments, Ltd., of 66, Wardour Street, W.1, are developing such an apparatus. Other substandard viewers are more simple in character, designed to be fitted to an ordinary rewind, are driven by the film being pulled through them, and do not provide sound.

You may be able to obtain further assistance from the Association for Scientific Photography, Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, W.C.

* * *

Flicker on Projector

It is a condition of flickerless projection that the periods of light obscuration and light disclosure should be the same. In your present arrangement you state that your main blade has an angle of 100 degrees, and therefore the angles of the two flicker blades and of the openings between them are 52 degrees each.

The effect of this is to give you three brief flashes of light with short periods of darkness between two of them and a relatively long period of darkness after the third, so that in effect you have superimposed on the three alternations per frame a rise and fall

in the general intensity of illumination which occurs only once per frame, and this is apparent as flicker.

The effect is probably aggravated by lack of dynamic balance of the whole shutter. Unless you can achieve some fairly close agreement between the angles of the main blade and the flicker blades and the angles between them flicker will continue to be apparent.

A split-blade shutter is a twin-bladed shutter which is geared to turn through $1\frac{1}{2}$ revolutions per frame, or in other words, give three alternations per picture.

* * *

Titling with Kodachrome

Q. What is the correct exposure for titling, using an Emel 8mm., 12.5, f/9.5 camera, on a Cinecraft Senior Titler, with Kodachrome: (a) using 2 x 100 watt pearl bulb, and (b) 1 x 100 watt and 1 photoflood?

I am unable to purchase a second photoflood—and would thus prefer the 2 x 100 watt pearls if they can be satisfactory.—J.T.H.B.

A. There are two types of Kodachrome, i.e., Standard Kodachrome which is balanced for use in daylight, and Kodachrome "A" which is balanced for use in artificial light such as is provided by the Photoflood lamp. Standard Kodachrome, used in Photoflood light, must be employed with a filter if the colour rendering is to be accurate, and is much slower than Kodachrome "A" under such conditions.

Secondly, the lamp given by an ordinary pearl or similar bulb burned at normal colour temperature will give much too red a result on colour film unless corrected by a relatively heavy filter. Because the colours emitted from a normal bulb and from a photoflood bulb respectively differ greatly in their red content, it is not possible to mix the two kinds of light with any degree of success when taking colour films.

Your best plan, then is to use with your Cinecraft Titler a single Photoflood lamp in a reflector at a distance of about 12 inches from the title card, when the exposure at 16 frames per second will be from f/5.6 to f/8. This recommendation should, however, be checked by careful exposure tests, as the limits are rather rigidly defined. The distance between lamp bulb and subject must be closely maintained in all shots as slight variations of the distance will gravely affect the exposure.

* * *

A.C.W. ENQUIRY SERVICE.

Readers are asked to note that we regret we cannot undertake to answer questions on 35mm. equipment, or the prospects of employment in the professional film industry. All replies to queries are sent by post, and a stamped, addressed envelope should be enclosed.

AMATEUR IN THE AIR

(Continued from page 309)

their camera and be prepared for the powerful push of air which tugs at it as soon as you rush it outside the protection of the little windscreen. In trying to avoid the slipstream I found myself peering through the viewfinder with my working lens below the edge of the cockpit, but luckily caught myself when only one short shot had been lost. Also, adjusting apertures and rotating the turret is not easy when one is peering through goggles.

However, the pilot's offer of a re-shoot should it be necessary did not have to be followed up, the results being all that was hoped for, with the exception of the one momentary error referred to, the sequence making a very suitable climax for the film. That it was convincing was proved by the amusement of the Squadron at their preview

when they saw their colleague appearing to handle a plane with ease.

The final length was 800 ft. of 16mm. film, and a carefully matched musical score with sound effects was arranged. Considerable interest was aroused in the district, one paper referring to the screening to the Mayor and Councillors as one of the high-lights of the year. A copy has been taken for an educational film library and further copies will be distributed.

The production of this film provides an opportunity for an amateur cinematographer to use his experience and equipment for a social purpose, which I hope is typical of a tendency in the movement, which will increase as peacetime facilities return. I can testify to the satisfaction to be felt in producing a film which will serve a definite purpose and reach a wide audience.

THEY FARE WELL IN SOUTH AFRICA

Sir,—When I was posted to South Africa in the summer of 1941 under the Empire Air Training Scheme, I thought I had abandoned amateur cine work for three years at least, but was pleasantly surprised to find that the amateur there enjoyed facilities comparable with, and in some cases better than, those available at home.

This was noticeably so in the case of film hire. The rate was only 3/6d. per reel for the first night, and 1/9d. per reel for each subsequent night (before the war 6d. a reel!). The entertainment quality was excellent. Practically all the big pictures produced by Paramount, Universal, R.K.O. and British studios were released soon after, and often concurrently with, their 35mm. release.

Block-booking is widely practised. One large firm—African Films—provides a 12-reel programme consisting of one feature and supporting shorts produced by the companies mentioned above. These shorts were also available at 3/6d. per reel for the first night, with no extra charge for Technicolor.

These cheap rates are a big incentive to projector sales. I asked why American projectors were sold, and not British, and was told that it was because British equipment was too bulky and heavy. The cine equipment available is almost exclusively 16mm. 8mm. is used to some extent, but 9.5mm. is practically unknown.

Cottesmore, Nr. Oakham.

L.A.C. JONES, G. B.

FORTY JOBS IN FILM MAKING

Short but meaty accounts of the qualifications necessary for forty jobs in film making, from screen play editor to publicity associate, are given by the director, Norman Lee, in a useful and readable little book, "A Film is Born" (Jordan & Sons, Ltd., 5s.). Mr. Lee evidently knows what he is talking about (except that he puts Ben Johnson in the same period as Boswell). He is a shrewd observer, full of enthusiasm for film making, while never losing sight of the fact that it is a business—a fact which the aspirant too often fails to appreciate. His book gives a valuable insight into the workings of a studio, administrative and technical, from the birth of the idea for a film to the finished production.

NEW SOCIETIES

Cine enthusiasts in the Isle of Wight are showing keen interest in the Isle of Wight Amateur Cine Society, which held its inaugural meeting on Sept. 12th, 1945. Meetings are now held fortnightly on Wednesday evenings at the Literary Society's premises in Newport, I.O.W. Recent programmes have included demonstrations of a Gebescope 16mm. sound projector and the G916 Paillard-Bolex projector, and projection evenings of members' personal 9.5mm. and 16mm. films. Details of membership may be obtained from the joint hon. secretaries, L. W. Jennings, 6, Clarence Road, Newport, I.O.W., and R. E. Hannam, 1, Queens Cottages, Old Road, East Cowes, I.O.W.

North Kent C.C.

The new North Kent Cine Club has started off well, its first meeting, at the end of September, having proved very successful. It has its headquarters

at the Sidcup Cine Service, Blackfenn Road, Sidcup, where it has at its disposal a well-designed theatre and the use of silent and sound equipment. Both beginners and advanced workers interested in sound projection and recording are catered for. Meetings are held every Monday. Full details may be obtained from the Hon. Sec., A. E. Stanton, 42, Springhead Road, Erith.

RELIGIOUS FILMS

The Christian Film Council has published in pamphlet form the address, "Spiritual Possibilities of Film," given at a conference of the Council this year by its Production Adviser, Andrew Buchanan. (Available from Henry E. Walter, 107, Fleet Street, Ludgate Circus, London, E.C.4, price 3d.)

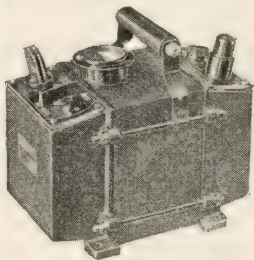
Mr. Buchanan points to the phenomenal growth of 16mm. audiences, which total over eighteen million a year, and urges that the Church should participate in it. He affirms that the spiritual integrity and sincerity of the producers is of more importance than their technical ability. "Indeed," he says, "probably for the first time in a discourse on film-making has the following statement been made—that high technical standards do not come first. The primary need is high spiritual quality."

* * *

Further supplies of paper are slowly becoming available and readers will note that we have increased this issue by four pages. We have also been able to print more copies to meet the increasing demand. Further improvements in the paper supply as they occur will permit further steps on our return to peacetime standards, and will be immediately applied to improvements in the service given by A.C.W.

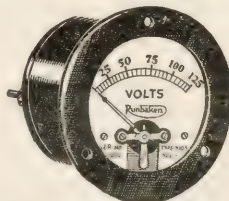
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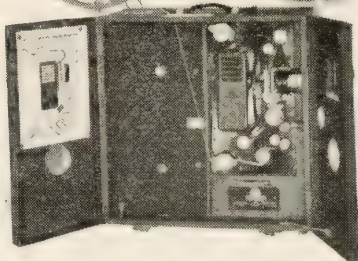
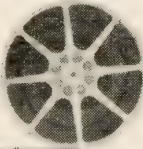
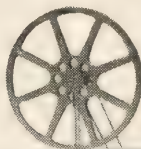
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MANCHESTER · 1

ON JUDGING FILMS (cont'd. from page 295)

in the Woodlands" and "Woodlands in the Spring," came up for your verdict. The sound quality of the first is impeccable—a triumph of the technician deserving of the highest praise. But unfortunately the literary quality of the commentary is trite: it bores you with its prolixity. The photography, too, is not consistently good and the editing is, in places, inadequate.

The sound quality of "Woodlands in the Spring," on the other hand, is by no means so striking a technical accomplishment as that of "Spring in the Woodlands"; on that count the latter wins hands down. But "Woodlands in the Spring" is intrinsically a better film than its rival. It scores in everything else that goes to make a film.

To which will you award the prize? And if you are tempted to decide too hastily, bear in mind that the award was instituted specifically to encourage the production of sound films as opposed to silent ones, and therefore, by inference, experimentation with sound.

A Question of Colour

Now suppose that you have to make an award for the best colour photography. You have just seen a 400ft. 16mm. film, "Garden at Chellow Dene," and have written out the following description of it for the benefit of your fellow judges:

"For colour photography, the shots in this film are well nigh as perfect as they can be. Exposure and colour are to all intents and purposes correct throughout the film. . . We give full credit to the film for colour, but we cannot do so for other branches of film making. The film comprises a succession of semi-static shots of a wide variety of flowers. The whole garden in all seasons appears to have been photographed in entirety. It would have been a relief to see a weed, or at least someone weeding. Judicious use of fades and mixes have made the film easier to watch, but the main fault lies in the mass of material that has been packed into the 400ft. To gardeners and flower lovers the film will have considerable appeal."

Now is that a description of a prize-winning film? It is, in fact, a report by the I.A.C. on the film which won the open award for colour photography. Note that the film consists of a mass of material comprising a succession of semi-static shots. Surely it is, on these grounds, cinematically inadequate?

We can judge only on the brief descriptions given by the Institute in its bulletin, but, if it is permissible to base one's opinion on these alone, may one ask if it is a better film than, say, "ABC of the Road" which did not win a prize but which is described as running "Cornish Cove" very close? We certainly do not wish to detract from the achievement of the producer, G. J. Hancock, and congratulate him on photographic skill which is obviously of a high order, but photographic skill, though vitally important, is only one of the ingredients of a successful film.

Problems of the Judges

We are fully sensible of the difficulties of the case, and are far from wanting to hammer the I.A.C.—an admirable body—over a state of affairs which initially may have been beyond their control. Several donors (ourselves included) presented it with trophies for competition, and it has been the Institute's not entirely enviable task to award those trophies to worthy films in such a manner as shall preserve the dignity of the donors.

Awkward problems in etiquette would have been likely to have arisen were Mr. A's cup awarded for the best film and Mr. B's plaque for the second best. The Institute's own International Challenge Trophy is, quite rightly, regarded as the major award. What, then, was to be done with the "Daily Mail" cup, presented in the days when the I.A.C. had more glitter but less value?

It was decided that it should be the "class award for lone workers and films of all types," a class so

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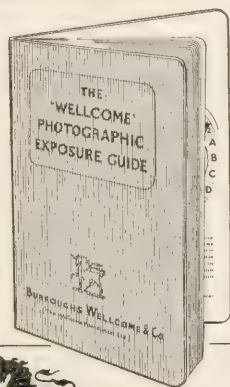
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all-embracing that it would have been surprising did it not throw up one film a year of a merit that could fittingly consort with the prestige of a national newspaper.

Our own two plaques we suggested should be awarded for the best 16mm. and 9.5mm. films in the hope that this would narrow the field a little, while the cup presented by the late "Home Movies" was awarded for the best 8mm. film. But even this has not always worked out in practice.

In the current competition, for instance, the last mentioned trophy goes to a film which "in its present form does not offer serious rivalry to the other prize-winners." The published criticisms of the films seem to suggest that, as a film, as distinct from an essay in 8mm., it might not have been of comparable merit with some of the also-rans in the other gauges, which are variously described as "a very good film," "general layout of a high standard" and "above the average."

We wish to make it clear that, although we have seen some of the films, and are familiar with the work of most of the competitors, we have not seen all the entries, and are alive to the danger of making untenable pontifical statements based on other people's opinions, unsupported by our own direct knowledge. We are anxious that we shall do no one an injustice, but the standing of the Institute in enabling us to accept its criticisms at their face value, also permits us to draw inferences from them.

In our view those criticisms abundantly show that the methods adopted are basically unsound and are entirely alien to the principles of film production. To award prizes for specific aspects of film making is to exalt the part above the whole. Film making is an infinitely complex art, depending for its success on the balance and relationship of its constituents. However superbly a film may be photographed, it fails if one or more of those constituents are badly handled. However brilliantly it may be edited, it fails if the camerawork is incompetent.

Sub-division by subject

A system that awards prizes for colour or photography is a misbegotten survival of certain aspects of still photography, a medium entirely different from the plastic art of moving pictures. But even in exhibitions of still photographs there are no classes for the photograph showing the best composition or the best lighting or of any other of the basic constituents that go to the making of a photograph. Sub-division can only be attempted in subject matter—in the case of still photography, landscapes, portraits, nudes.

Our own view is that in cinematography even sub-division of subject matter is not an entirely happy solution. Our own competition is for the Ten Best Films of the Year, irrespective of subject and with no attempt at assessing the relative merits of the prize-winners. It is not difficult to recognise a good film, but it is not a simple matter to determine how far subject matter affects the result.

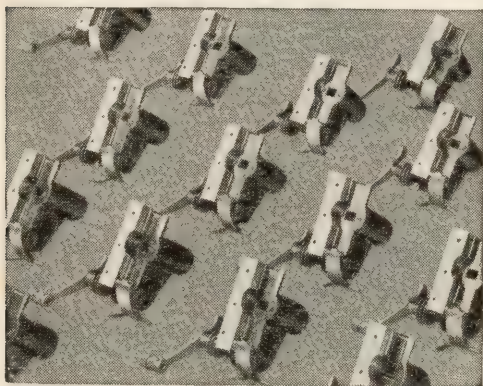
Where prizes given by a number of donors for the same competition are to be awarded, it will be appreciated that this system would be scarcely practicable, and here classification according to subject seems the best and fairest answer: Mr. A's cup for the best documentary film, Mr. B's plaque for the best family film, Mr. C's trophy for the best travel film. If the travel film also happens to show the most imaginative use of colour, that will be an added reason for the award; but it should never be the main reason.

I.A.C. PRIZEWINNERS

In addition to the films mentioned above, the following (all silent) also won prizes in the I.A.C. 1945 Contest:

"An Open Letter" by S. F. Martin (16mm., colour, 450ft.)—A.C.W. 16mm. plaque; "Wings of Tomorrow" by D. Shaw Ashton (16mm., monochrome, 400ft.)—Daily Mail cup; "Springtime in the Park" by J. Marsh (9.5mm., monochrome,

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It is not within anyone's province to state when new machines will be available to the public, insofar as there are other determining factors besides the manufacture, chief of which is release to the public by the Government. Until this happens it is not even possible to state the price at which this model will be on sale. It is also the view of this firm that there will not be any new machines on offer on a free basis this season, or if so—very few indeed. Meanwhile, we have usually a fair stock of leading makes in sound and silent machines and your enquiries are solicited. Service Department deals with all repairs. Lamps, lenses, screens, etc., always in stock.

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Note.—Due to restrictions on printing of 8mm. films, sufficient new releases have not been issued to warrant publication of a new catalogue. It is expected that restrictions will be relaxed in the near future, when a new catalogue will immediately be published.

The "Substandard Film Review," published quarterly. Price 3d., post free. Contains synopsis and illustrations from new releases in all libraries. Number 6 available. Number 7 in print. Back issues available, price 2d., each plus postage.

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120ft.)—Wallace Heaton trophy; "West of the Border," also by J. Marsh (9.5mm., monochrome, 400ft.)—A.C.W. 9.5mm. plaque. These last two films, the judges write, "are positive proof of our long held contention that 9.5mm. can compete with 16mm. For photographic quality they will teach most 16mm. amateurs a lesson or two." "Bees and Beekeeping" by A. Waller (8mm., monochrome and colour, 550ft.)—"Home Movies" cup. "Garden at Chellow Dene," mentioned in our editorial, won the Sheffield Photo Co.'s trophy.

COMMERCIAL LIBRARY RELEASES AMATEUR FILMS

Amateur Cine World has frequently stated the case for the circulation of amateur films by the commercial libraries, and we are therefore very glad to announce that two 16mm. films—"Jacob's Ladder" (1 reel) and "Pound on the Rates" (2 reels)—by our contributor, H. A. V. Bulleid are to be released by Kirkham Sub-standard Film Service, Winwick Road, Warrington.

"Your recent editorials have been of great interest to me," Mr. Kirkham writes, "as for some years I have had the idea of forming a library of amateur productions. Mr. Bulleid's films are now being printed, and will be available at the usual hire rates."

If the demand warrants further releases of amateur films, the firm is prepared to set aside a sum of money for the printing of new acquisitions, any profit from the venture to be used for the purpose of acquiring further prints. At present it is possible to release only 16mm. films, but 8mm. and 9.5mm. versions of the same productions may be issued later. Dupe negatives will be made of films on reversal stock.

Kirkhams have already issued two one reel comedies by the Warrington C.S., "Fishy Business" and "House Business."

FAMOUS LIBRARY FILMS

We share our readers' disappointment at the absence from this issue of H. A. V. Bulleid's "Famous Library Films." No small part of the value of the series to the student of film lies in the exhaustive manner in which each film is analysed; to condense the articles would impair their uniqueness and usefulness. When problems of space are pressing—as they always are in quarterly publication—there can, therefore, be only two alternatives: to publish in full or to hold over. For this issue we have had, unfortunately, to make the latter decision; but we hope to find space very soon for—among others—reviews of "The Lady Vanishes," "The Spy" and "Night Mail." Meanwhile, yet another testimony to the series is contained in the note below.

FILM APPRECIATION COURSES AT EXETER

On behalf of Exeter Education Committee, Mr. Stuart Keen is conducting a Film Appreciation Course extending over 24 weeks, from September to March. The Course is proving so popular with citizens that the Committee have decided to extend it to two other centres, making three classes each week. "With the co-operation of the British Film Institute, and the invaluable contributions of Mr. H. A. V. Bulleid in *Amateur Cine World*," Mr. Keen is able to offer an extensive and detailed study of the history of cinema from its earliest beginnings to the present day.

Many classics are being screened to illustrate the lectures, e.g., "Shoulder Arms," "Dr. Caligari," "Siegfried," "Cinderella," "Last Laugh," "Metropolis," "Battleship Potemkin," "Covered Wagon," "Italian Straw Hat," "White Hell of Pitz Palu" (synchronised), "Kameradschaft," "Blue Angel," "Man of Aran," "The Cheat" and "South Riding"; documentaries will include "Nanook of the North," "Grass," "Song of Ceylon," "The River" and "Mor Vran."

A notable feature of the classes is the enthusiasm of students, displayed by numerous questions and free discussion.

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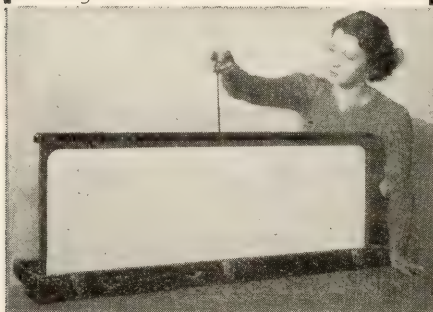
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(Continued from page 328)

WANTED

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Wanted. Bolex G916, good condition essential,
late model preferred. BM/QIBJ London, W.C.1.

Wanted. Baby Pathe Cine Camera for animated
cartoon work. Details to Box 765.

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jector, good condition and late model. Craig, 20,
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For Sale. Amprosound Talkie Projector. Model N. 750w. lamp. Extra cable. Spare lamp and belts. Perfect. £395. 57, Rossendale Road, Burnley.

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Best-Howell Filmosound Talkie Projector, latest model, two cases, unmarked condition, complete all equipment, screen, etc., spares, also Filmo Model 75 Cine Camera, 15mm. and 20mm. lens, 200 ft. film unexposed. £500 or near offer the lot. 298, Chester Rd., Streety, Staffs. Tel.: Streety 7685.

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For Sale. 16mm. Silent film service. 2/- two nights. Free catalogue. Pettipher, Monksilver, 3, Branksome Wood Road, Bournemouth.

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For Sale. PatheScope 200b. Good condition with extension arms for 900ft. reels. Transformer, spare lamp, resistance, Film Splicer 16, 300ft. empty reels. Buyer collects. Price £33. Redhead, "Two Brewers," 114, High Street, Clapham, S.W.4.

For Sale. Pathe Super Vox, complete with spare lamp and valves. 8100ft. film (4 features, 3 cartoons). Beaded screen, self erecting, 30in. x 40in., beaded screen 6ft. x 8ft. 9.5mm. splicer. All in good condition. £250 complete. Longstaff, "Lyndene," Dane Avenue, Barrow-in-Furness. Phone 1061.

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For Sale.—35, 16, 9.5mm. equipment films and electrical equipment. S.A.E. to Box 771.

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Country Electric Light Plant and Cinematography Outfit. Lister Diesel 5 h.p. engine, 54 cell 105 volt. chloride battery and dynamo, Bolex H 9.5 camera with f/1.5 Dal. and 3" Tele. lens, 750' unexposed film, Pathe 200B projector and Rotary converter. £300 or near offer. Would sell separately. Box 774.

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(Continued on page 326)

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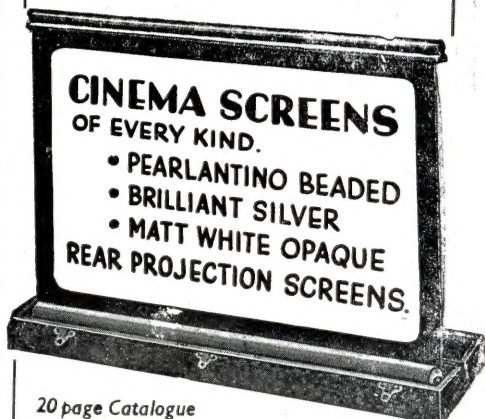
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